

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 02264 231005Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 SNM-05 DEAE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 /092 W
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, SNAR, BM, AS
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN OPPOSITION LEADER VISITS BURMA

1. MR. WILLIAM GEORGE HAYDEN, LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN
OPPOSITION LABOUR PARTY, VISITED BURMA JUNE 16-18 AS PART OF A
TOUR OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES. WHILE HERE, MR. HAYDEN
HAD A PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NE WIN, AND ALSO SAW THE
PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
PLANNING AND FINANCE. ACCORDING TO THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY,
THE SESSIONS PRODUCED LITTLE OF INTEREST. THE PRESIDENT
REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED SOME INTEREST IN HAYDEN'S PROPOSAL FOR
"JOINT ACTION" BY SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO COUNTER NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKERS. HE ALSO TOLD HAYDEN THAT THE REASON BURMA'S ECONOMY
WAS IN SUCH POOR SHAPE WAS THAT 40 PERCENT OF THE BUDGET WAS
BEING SPENT FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE. THE AUSTRALIANS SAID THE
REST OF THE HOUR-LONG CONVERSATION WITH NE WIN WAS MOSTLY ABOUT
AUSTRALIAN POLITICS. (NE WIN REPORTEDLY HIT IT OFF VERY WELL
WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM. WHEN THE LATTER VISITED HERE
IN 1974, THE TWO LEADERS SPENT SIX HOURS TOGETHER IN ANIMATED
CONVERSATION, AND NE WIN MADE A RETURN VISIT TO AUSTRALIA
LATER IN THE SAME YEAR.)

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2. COMMENT: WE ARE VERY SKEPTICAL THAT NE WIN HAS ANY REAL
INTEREST IN "JOINT ACTION" WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE NARCOTICS
FIELD. THIS WOULD RUN COUNTER TO EVERYTHING THE BURMESE HAVE
SAID AND DONE PREVIOUSLY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT BURMA COULD BE
SPENDING AS MUCH AS 40 PERCENT OF THE BUDGET FOR SECURITY OF
ALL TYPES, INCLUDING POLICE. HOWEVER, OFFICIAL STATISTICS SHOW
THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE GETS ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF THE CURRENT

EXPENDITURE BUDGET.

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Message Attributes

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